

independent. But even if one of these goals is achieved, the impact would literally transform the energy sector. And if every one of these ambitious goals is reached, our country would be free from our addiction to foreign oil, and we will have guaranteed our economic and national security tape for future generations.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Ms. FALLIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. FALLIN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PETITION TO LOWER GASOLINE PRICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here tonight to address you and the other Members of this body. And I wanted to bring to the attention, Mr. Speaker, the fact that I guess several weeks ago we had calls from constituents and seeing constituents at town hall meetings and other places. They had asked me if I had been on-line or on the Internet to sign some of the petitions that different people had up to bring down the price of gas. They were tired of going to the pump and paying \$4 a gallon for the gas.

They had heard the promises from the Majority of the 110th Congress made back when they were running for office, that they had a commonsense plan to bring down the cost of skyrocketing gas which, at the time, was about \$2.20. It's now about \$4.08. So they were mystified as much as I was about what this secret plan was. And so they were going on-line and signing these Internet petitions asking us to let us know, Members of this body, that they were demanding that gas prices come down, and by doing that, to drill here and to drill now.

One of those Internet sites, and there's many, but one is American Solutions. And I understand today, from reading an article, that over a million Americans have gone to that site and said, you know what? Let's drill here, let's drill now, and let's lower gas prices.

And so I was thinking to myself because I had gone into a service station to fill up with the \$4 a gallon gas in my pickup truck, and there was a petition laying on the counter that said, you know, we want our gas prices brought down. Sign this petition.

And I thought, you know, not only is this an Internet, but people that are working at these service stations and I'm sure other places are having these petitions saying, you know, we need our energy costs brought down.

And Mr. Speaker, I said, you know, the American people need to know how

their Members of Congress feel. We're hearing from them on all of these different petitions how they feel. They need to know how their representative feels.

So I came up with a petition. And basically, this petition says, American energy solutions for lower gas prices. And it brings onshore oil on-line. It brings deep water oil on-line. And it brings new refineries on-line. And that's pretty simple. That's about as simple as you can get in this body.

Everything we vote on here is so convoluted that many of the Members don't understand what they're voting on, Mr. Speaker. And a majority of the American people do not know. Some of these bills are three and four and 500 pages. And it's hard to consume all that information and understand what is going on. So a lot of Members can have an excuse to vote for or against it because, as Mr. OBEY said today on the floor, they make these bills to get 218 votes. So they take these bills and put as many sweeteners in it as they need to get to 218. So many Members can say, well, it was a bad piece of legislation, but because they put X, Y, or Z in it, I voted for it.

I wanted to keep this petition as simple as possible. And so basically, what the petition says, I will vote to increase U.S. oil production, to lower gas prices for Americans. How much simpler can you get?

Mr. Speaker, you can't imagine some of the answers from the Members of this body for not wanting to sign this. They're unbelievable. I don't know how they're going to explain it to their constituents, but their constituents have an opportunity to see, and we update this, Mr. Speaker, on our Web site, which is house.gov/westmoreland, W-E-S-T-M-O-R-E-E-L-A-N-D. We update it after every series of votes, so it will be updated probably in about 30 or 45 minutes. It will be updated and you can go to that Web site. And we had 32,000 hits on that Web site last night, for people wanting to go and see how their congressman felt about it.

Now, we've had about 160 Congressmen that have signed this so far, so we're probably about 58 short of getting to 218, which is what you need to pass this.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all Americans to go to that and to find out how the Members of this House feel about lowering gas prices in this country.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their comments to the Chair.

□ 2100

GAO'S GOOD DECISION FOR WARFIGHTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 18, 2007, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, we come to the floor this evening to discuss this good news that we read yesterday for our warfighters doing great jobs for the U.S. Air Force and for the taxpayers who are providing the equipment for the Air Force and for a lot of working families in the United States. And that was the decision by the General Accountability Office to essentially allow the protests against the previous proposed decision by the United States Air Force to send a contract for the construction of 80 tankers which refuel our Air Force planes essentially overseas to a combination that is largely European by the Airbus Company.

And we are extremely gratified and vindicated that the General Accountability Office has found that in seven very fundamental ways, the decision by the Air Force to send this American tanker using American taxpayer dollars for American warriors essentially overseas, and they have found that this was a decision that violated some general principles of procurement in issuing contracts using taxpayer dollars. In a very forceful and powerful and unambiguous decision, the General Accountability Office, we call it the GAO up here, concluded that this purported decision to send this contract away was a bad decision, bottom line. And this decision must be reviewed and we hope ultimately reversed.

So we've come to the floor tonight to talk about why that decision was appropriate, why it is welcome, and why we hope the Air Force will move forward working with the bidders on this contract to really reach a decision that's going to be in the best interest of the country as a whole, including our warfighters and our taxpayers and our working families.

And just if I can by way just as a matter of background, this is a contract for eventually 179 what are called KC-X aircraft. The first tranche would be 80 aircraft. These are the tankers that refuel our airplanes, and they are obviously the backbone of our Air Force. Without tankers, we don't have an Air Force. This is perhaps the most critical of the one type of airplane we have because this type of airplane has to be right for the job, competent, survivable, cost-effective, or we don't have an Air Force that requires this refueling capacity.

Now, the contractor that we'll talk about tonight, the Boeing Company, has been essentially the exclusive suppliers of these tankers for the United States Air Force for five decades and with incredible success. The KC-135 has been an enormously successful airplane, and the Boeing family of workers that have provided it have been proud to provide that background. And they were, of course, a bidder to provide the Boeing 767 as the platform, a very well-respected workhorse airplane that is converted for tanker purposes.